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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; ARMENIAN GENOCIDE; US-LATIN AMERICAN TIES;
SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CUBA AND MYANMAR; 10/11/07

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's leading international stories include implications of a US House committee vote to condemn the mass killings of Armenians in Turkey in World War I as an act of genocide; prospects for the US-Latin American relationship; and similarities between the military regimes in Cuba and Myanmar.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "A Turning Point"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarn," writes (10/11) "While one should be cautious, the outcome of the dispute between the White House and Capitol Hill (over the Armenian genocide) foretells a serious loss of power for the Bush administration. The issue worsens if one bears in mind that the dispute will strain the alliance between the USG and Turkey in the context of the failed war in Iraq.

"Rather than freeing (Turkey's) hands, what happened in Washington could further complicate Turkey's goal to enter Europe, which is already clouded by its unwillingness to acknowledge the Armenian genocide during the Ottoman Empire.

"It will be a tough road without the concrete support of the US, which would not tolerate more chaos in the (Persian) Gulf.

"However, the turning point has a profound ethical dimension. It shows that the massacre of over one million and a half human beings may no longer be overlooked or used as a political tool, which is far from the inalienable right to justice."

- "A change for Latin America?"

Jorge Sosa, political editor of business-financial "El Cronista," comments (10/11) "Riordan Roett, head of Latin American Studies at John Hopkins University, said: 'Unluckily for Latin America, all Democratic candidates have switched to protectionist positions as far as trade is concerned.' Consensus among analysts (and even in the view of members of the Bush administration) is that no radical change will take place in the US-Latin American relationship, whose agenda is dominated by the Cuban issue, the problem of immigration and the US-promoted bilateral free trade deals with several countries.

"The problem of failed immigration reform... is a thorny issue in the election campaign, to the point that Republicans have avoided debating this point. Roett explains: 'This is an unpopular issue and it is unclear what position Hillary will adopt on the new

legislation after elections.'

"The relationship with Brazil and the possibility of making progress in developing a strategic alliance on bio-fuels is one of the pillars of the US relationship with the region, while the Venezuela of Hugo Chavez is a red alarm.

"In the view of analyst Michael Shifter, contrary to expectations, 'it will be hard to find a president with the commitment to the region that Bush has had.'

"Nonetheless, the focus of US policy on Iraq and the Middle East has certainly contributed to increasing the distance. For this reason, and as a result of the American society's dissatisfaction with the Iraq issue and Washington's need for new allies, expectations are that 'there will be a much more multilateral approach to US foreign policy, which could bring an indirect beneficial impact' on Latin America. In fact, the Iraq problem and the conflict between Arabs and Palestinians will remain priorities for the White House. For instance, yesterday, Hillary made it clear that she does not see a date for the withdrawal of troops from Baghdad.

"According to Jos Ral Perales, an analyst at the Woodrow Wilson Center, 'there is an opportunity for a more constructive relationship.'

"For many, Argentina is missing from the debate at least for now."

- "Myanmar is just like Cuba"

Daily-of-record "La Nacisn" (10/11) editorializes "... There is practically no individual freedom in Burma and its government actively thwarts every freedom. In Burma, just as in Cuba, any meeting of a number of people is illegal as well as every expression of opposition to the Government. It is impossible to freely access phones or Internet and the imprisonment of dissident journalists,

artists or ordinary citizens is regular practice...

"On economic matters, just as in Cuba, Myanmar exercises arbitrary control on prices, foreign trade, property, foreign investment and markets in general, and this is why it is not surprising that, according to Transparency International, Myanmar is the most corrupt country in the world along with Somalia.

"Interestingly enough, just one week before the bloody repression of opponents in Myanmar was made public, FM U. Nyan Win, from Myanmar, and Cuban FM Felipe Prez Roque met in Havana... and Prez Roque said that 'Myanmar is, just like Cuba, a free country that has to confront an unfair and unequal world, in which it is hard for our countries to access social and economic development.'

"... In fact, the thing that is difficult for the military regimes of Cuba and Myanmar is to lose their privileges, open up to democracy and stop chasing, imprisoning and killing opponents."

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